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Summary record of the 2nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 20 February 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Viotti ..... (Brazil)

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08-24872 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

1. **The Chairperson** said she took it that the Commission, in accordance with its established practice, wished to hold an open meeting.

2. *It was so decided.*

Adoption of the agenda (PBC/2/GNB/3)

3. *The agenda was adopted.*

Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau

4. **The Chairperson** said that, during her visit to Guinea-Bissau in late January 2008, she had met with a number of Government officials from that country and it had been agreed that the Government of Guinea-Bissau would send a delegation to New York to address the Peacebuilding Commission in its country configuration. During her meetings with those Government officials, she had stressed the importance of national ownership of the process of engagement with the Commission. She accordingly welcomed the high-level delegation from that country.

5. **Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa), speaking as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group of the Economic and Social Council on Guinea-Bissau, said that the Advisory Group had undertaken its initial visit to Guinea-Bissau in 2002 and it had been clear from that time that the people of Guinea-Bissau were ready to take their future into their own hands.

6. The priorities for Guinea-Bissau would probably include predictable budget support, security sector reform, assistance with the country's unsustainable debt, quick-impact income-generating projects and help in combating drug smuggling. Guinea-Bissau had presented plans on those issues on a number of previous occasions, and the Advisory Group's findings would be made available to members of the Peacebuilding Commission.

7. The situation in Guinea-Bissau was very complex, as the Government faced the challenge of governing while also building the institutions that were required for effective government. In addition to the usual challenges of socio-economic development, it needed to address the issues of economic transition, reconciliation and security sector reform. With the support of the Peacebuilding Commission, Guinea-Bissau would finally get the assistance that it deserved.

8. **Mr. Cabi** (Guinea-Bissau) said that his country had gone through a period of political, social and economic turmoil which began in 1998, when a military uprising had led to civil conflict. The country's socio-economic infrastructure had been almost totally destroyed and even when the war had ended in 1999, the conflict and problems had persisted. Despite the holding of several elections, political divisiveness had continued until the most recent election in 2005, when the people had finally realized that the country could not be run unless there was consensus and dialogue between the Government and civil society. The main parties had reached an agreement on a political stability pact and the new Government had a clear mandate to pursue peace and reconciliation.

9. The Government's priorities had been defined in the context of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The top priority was to hold fair and transparent elections in November or December 2008 in a climate of peace and reconciliation. Other priorities included the payment of salary arrears to public-sector employees; improvement of the fiscal situation; combating corruption; defence and security sector reform to address the problems of providing housing, food and other benefits for war veterans; downsizing of the public sector to cut its payroll, which had increased more than threefold since the war; combating drug trafficking, which caused many problems and even threatened the very existence of the State.

10. In terms of achievements, the current Government had inter alia established a budget for the elections and a programme for payment of debt incurred during previous elections; paid most salary arrears; introduced new rules for public finances; established a single account for all Government revenue; eliminated a number of unnecessary expenses; and established a Treasury Committee on which representatives of the security forces had been invited to serve to ensure transparency. Furthermore, a system was being developed whereby public sector employees would be paid through a bank account, thus, eliminating the problem of "ghost" employees.

11. In the security sector, the efforts to register and integrate war veterans had paid good dividends and the National Assembly had approved a strategic document for reform of the security and defence services. A programme to combat drug trafficking had been established, with assistance from the United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime. The Government of Portugal had hosted the International Conference on Drug Trafficking in Guinea-Bissau in 2007.

12. While his Government was committed to resolving the problems of Guinea-Bissau, financial support from the international community would be equally important for the success of its reform efforts. In that context, assistance provided by the Commission should particularly focus on the following priority areas, inter alia: the payment of salary arrears, especially in the health and education sectors; the updating of electoral rolls; the improvement of housing conditions for the military; the provision of vocational training designed to create a skilled labour force; investment in the nation's dilapidated electricity infrastructure, particularly in the countryside; and measures to bolster the cashew export industry, the nation's most important employment sector.

13. **Mr. Omoregie** (Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, UNOGBIS) said that the current meeting was the culmination of months of hard work by the Government of Guinea-Bissau, during which it had collaborated closely with such partners as the United Nations system, the European Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP). Since taking office in April 2007, the current Government had carried through significant initiatives to lay the groundwork for political stabilization, economic recovery and peace consolidation. Those initiatives included: the launch in May 2007 of the Government's programme for the restoration of fiscal stability; the ratification in July 2007 of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption; the launch in July 2007 of an emergency plan to combat drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau; the holding in December 2007 of the Lisbon international conference on drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau; the implementation since June 2007 of an organizational framework for security sector reform; and the launch on 23 January 2008 of the Government's security sector reform programme.

14. However, it was important for those initiatives to be reinforced. In that connection, the Commission's engagement with Guinea-Bissau would provide an added impetus that could help to make the transition from post-conflict reconstruction to peace consolidation irreversible, thereby yielding concrete dividends in terms of political stability and socio-economic development.

15. The international community had shown exemplary support to the Government of Guinea-Bissau following its request for Guinea-Bissau to be placed on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. Such engagement with the Commission would clearly put the country under the international spotlight, which should help attract more assistance from the donor community. For its part, the Government of Guinea-Bissau had shown that it possessed the necessary political will and commitment to fulfil the Commission's expectations.

16. The main priority areas identified earlier by the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau brought together the security and development dimensions of peacebuilding, which the Commission was in a unique position to support. Quick-impact projects in the areas of health, energy, elections and youth empowerment were also necessary to help strengthen the country's peacebuilding efforts. However, in order for such programmes to move forward successfully, resource mobilization was vital. The Government's current engagement with the Commission would therefore count in terms of complementarities and the coordination of assistance from partners. Guinea-Bissau's engagement with the Commission would also undoubtedly ensure that a holistic approach was taken to resource mobilization efforts.

17. At the same time, the Government and the international community would be expected to stay the course until the real work of peacebuilding had been completed. The success of such efforts would ultimately depend upon national ownership, a close partnership between the Government and the international community, and effective implementation and monitoring of projects, including the timely disbursement of financial resources. A strengthened international partnership with Guinea-Bissau was required to lay the foundation for political stability, economic growth and long-term development. The next stage of articulating a strategic framework for the Commission's engagement with Guinea-Bissau would be important in building that partnership.

18. **Mr. Takasu** (Japan) said that the attendance at the current meeting by a high-level delegation, headed

by the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, testified to the strong commitment of that country's Government and people to peacebuilding. National reconciliation, political stabilization and capacity-building had been identified by the Prime Minister as the most urgent challenges facing Guinea-Bissau. In that connection, it was particularly important to register voters in order to ensure that fair and transparent elections took place at the end of the year; to reform the public and security sectors so as to combat the instability caused by organized crime, particularly drug trafficking; and to identify and implement quick-impact projects that would make a real difference on the ground.

19. His delegation agreed that the Peacebuilding Fund should be used to provide short-term financial assistance in order to fill immediate financial gaps in peacebuilding efforts. However, it was unrealistic to expect the Commission to be able to address all the difficult challenges ahead. Its major focus therefore should be on raising the awareness of the international community, bringing traditional and non-traditional actors together, and mobilizing resources. The most urgent tasks should be the completion of a needs assessment and the development of a peacebuilding framework for Guinea-Bissau.

20. Speaking as Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, he noted that he had personally been engaged in establishing strong cooperative relationships with major bilateral and multilateral partners, including the World Bank. Furthermore, while Japan was not a traditional donor to Guinea-Bissau, his Government intended to study where it could be of most assistance, particularly taking into account the priority areas mentioned earlier by the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau.

21. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica) expressed his country's strong support for and solidarity with Guinea-Bissau and emphasized that the Commission's role with respect to that country must be based on the Organization's three pillars: development, peace and security and human rights. In that connection, his delegation agreed that all of the Commission's actions must be taken simultaneously, not sequentially, and that the implementation of quick-impact projects should be a priority. The Government of Guinea-Bissau was to be commended on the important reform efforts that it had already undertaken. However, in order to ensure that progress continued to be made, the international community must provide the necessary financial support that had been requested, particularly in the energy sector.

22. **Mr. Salgueiro** (Portugal) acknowledged the various reform efforts undertaken by the Government of Guinea-Bissau and underscored the need to ensure political stability and dialogue between all sectors of society in that country. The Commission's work with respect to Guinea-Bissau should be guided by the need for national ownership, taking into account the priorities set by the Government and the assessment of gaps and needs identified by the Commission. His delegation looked forward to working with the Government of Guinea-Bissau in the very near future on the definition of a strategic framework and on the identification of quick-impact projects. In that context, an early announcement of Guinea-Bissau's eligibility to access the Peacebuilding Fund would be welcome.

23. **Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo** (Spain), welcoming the reform efforts already undertaken by the Government of Guinea-Bissau, said that the Commission's short-term objective should be to make progress on developing a strategic framework for peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau on the basis of all existing work, including its national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and its strategy for the modernization and restructuring of the defence and security sector. His delegation also agreed that it was important for the Commission to grant Guinea-Bissau access to the Peacebuilding Fund. Lastly, he asked the Prime Minister what the international community could do to ensure the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts throughout Guinea-Bissau, and specifically what actions the Commission should take to broaden the scope and intensity of support from donor countries and institutions.

24. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) welcomed the emphasis that had been placed on government ownership of programmes in priority areas such as energy, health, employment and elections. He recommended that a country envelope in the region of $35 million should be made available from the Peacebuilding Fund for implementation of quick-impact projects in the energy and security sectors. Clarification should be provided of the role of civil society and the private sector in the peacebuilding process and it would be interesting to learn more about land and property rights in the post-conflict context.

25. **Mr. Christian** (Ghana) said that the Government of Guinea-Bissau should be commended for the steps it had taken to ensure political stability and improve living conditions. The people of Guinea-Bissau had also played an important role in establishing peace. It was therefore important that the Peacebuilding Commission should advocate international support for increased funding of quick-impact projects. His delegation acknowledged the important role of UNOGBIS in promoting security sector reform, combating drug trafficking, guaranteeing human rights and establishing the rule of law. Ghana would continue to support the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and would maintain its bilateral assistance to Guinea-Bissau with a view to ensuring stability in West Africa.

26. **Mr. Lima** (Cape Verde) said that the clear and sincere statement delivered by the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau had shown the Government's commitment to improving the people's welfare. It was essential that the Prime Minister had been willing to acknowledge the challenges facing Government. Cape Verde understood those difficulties because of its extremely close ties with Guinea-Bissau. It was especially important that the Government had brought opposing parties together to engage in dialogue and take part in the peacebuilding process. The Prime Minister's statement showed that the Government was willing to take ownership of the necessary reforms in the context of significant challenges, including in the energy sector.

27. With respect to security sector reforms, it was essential to improve living conditions in barracks so that troops would not be tempted to stage a coup d'état. Furthermore, the consolidation of the rule of law would give the diaspora greater confidence in the country and would encourage civil servants to return home. Finally, the Peacebuilding Commission should identify the specific needs of Guinea-Bissau and have confidence in the Government to implement quick-impact projects aimed at addressing those target areas. For example, donor support was urgently required to enable the Government to tackle organized transnational crime, which the Prime Minister had identified as a priority area in his statement.

28. **Mr. Gaspar Martins** (Angola) said that the Prime Minister's statement had sent a signal that the Government was ready and willing to assume national ownership of the important task of national reconciliation. It was significant that the Government itself had identified the priority areas and had been responsible for establishing political stability. However, in order for the people and Government of Guinea-Bissau to have confidence in the Peacebuilding Commission's commitment, it was important that funds should be made available to the Government from the Peacebuilding Fund before the delegation of Guinea-Bissau left New York. The development of a cooperation framework by the Peacebuilding Support Office would provide the Peacebuilding Commission with a road map. Given the crucial importance of the energy sector to the country's development, clarification should be provided of the feasibility of using internally produced energy. He reiterated his delegation's strong commitment to supporting Guinea-Bissau with concrete actions.

29. **Mr. Natalegawa** (Indonesia) said that the Government of Guinea-Bissau had shown commitment to the principle of national ownership and it was important that it should be provided with resources through the Peacebuilding Fund. It might be useful for other countries that had experienced similar post-conflict situations to share lessons learned with Guinea-Bissau. His delegation would continue to support the implementation of quick-impact projects in Guinea-Bissau.

30. **Mr. Sen** (India) said that the Prime Minister's statement had shown the Government's commitment to taking ownership of the peacebuilding process and his delegation supported the call to make resources from the Peacebuilding Fund available to the Government on an urgent basis. The Peacebuilding Fund could be used to support both immediate peace consolidation projects based on the priorities outlined by the Prime Minister and medium-term peace consolidation plans. It was important that the Peacebuilding Commission should mobilize funds through advocacy and through negotiations with international financial institutions to develop special finance programmes for housing and infrastructure. It was especially important to establish adequate living conditions for soldiers. Resources should be mobilized for quick-impact projects in the areas of electricity, sanitation and health and vocational training. In addition, it was important to finalize the cooperation framework in consultation with the Government and to consider the participation of other United Nations bodies in key areas. The overriding goal was to empower the Government and public

administration to develop and continue with nationally driven efforts to consolidate peace.

31. **Mr. Sow** (Guinea) said that, since the Government had come into power in April 2007, progress had been made in the areas of security, good governance and the economy. However, in spite of efforts of traditional donors such as Portugal and Spain, Guinea-Bissau had been isolated by lack of appropriate resources and funding. It was time for the Peacebuilding Commission to support the Government's efforts to combat drug trafficking. Given the problems facing Guinea-Bissau, it was important that the Peacebuilding Commission should take action on allocating resources to the country through the Peacebuilding Fund. Drawing attention to the close links between his country and Guinea-Bissau, he said there was no doubt that peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau would have a positive effect on the subregion as a whole.

32. **Ms. Štiglic** (European Community) said that the Prime Minister's statement had not only outlined the challenges facing the country; it demonstrated the Government's commitment to taking adequate measures aimed at ensuring lasting peace, security and stability. The European Union remained committed to assisting Guinea-Bissau in a number of areas, including security sector reform. A programme would be implemented within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy to advise the local authorities on security sector reform in order to establish the conditions required for implementation of the national security strategy and facilitate subsequent donor engagement. With respect to drug trafficking, it would be interesting to learn how the Government would link the national plan of action to combat drug trafficking and the wider security sector reforms. It was important to clarify the role of the Peacebuilding Commission in addressing the challenges facing Guinea-Bissau. It seemed that its main task should be to create an environment conducive to attracting a wider level of donor support from the international community.

33. **Mr. Geurts** (European Community), speaking on behalf of the European Commission as a donor organization, said that most of the priorities outlined by the representative of Guinea-Bissau were reflected in the programming for the ninth and tenth European Development Funds. Implementation of initiatives under the Funds should continue, and his delegation looked forward to the vital contribution of the Peacebuilding Commission in that regard.

34. He welcomed the proposed dual approach of quick-impact projects supported by a long-term strategy. It was now necessary to "prioritize the priorities". One of the most urgent challenges was the preparations for the upcoming elections. His delegation was concerned that there remained a shortfall in funding for the elections, despite initial contributions received from a number of parties, including the European Commission. He requested further information from the delegation of Guinea-Bissau in that regard. Implementation of the plan to combat drug trafficking was another urgent priority.

35. One of the most important tasks of the Peacebuilding Commission was to expand the donor base for Guinea-Bissau, which would benefit the country but would also present it with the challenge of increasing its administrative capacity to manage the additional aid. He hoped that the Peacebuilding Commission would identify mechanisms for facilitating that process. It was also crucial to provide the Government with budgetary support in order to address problems such as the payment of salary arrears to civil servants and to carry out the necessary administrative reforms.

36. **Mr. Macheve** (Mozambique) commended the progress already made by Guinea-Bissau and said that his country, having experienced a post-conflict recovery process, understood the problems which Guinea-Bissau faced. Mozambique would continue to support the Government and people of Guinea-Bissau in their efforts to enjoy the benefits of lasting peace. The Government of Guinea-Bissau was taking its share of the responsibility for addressing the country's problems. It was now time for the international community, including traditional and non-traditional partners and bilateral, regional and multilateral actors, to play its part by providing the necessary resources. He appealed to the United Nations to take the lead in coordinating the international community's interventions so as to avoid duplication of efforts. Successful action by the Peacebuilding Commission in Guinea-Bissau would have a positive impact on other post-conflict situations around the world.

37. **Mr. Veyssière** (France) said that his delegation was encouraged by the progress made in Guinea-Bissau to date and would continue to support the

country's efforts to tackle its problems. He welcomed the establishment of clear objectives focused on sectors that were key to peacebuilding efforts, in particular the security and justice sectors.

38. Coordination with civil society and with the international financial institutions would be essential for the development of a peacebuilding strategy. In addition, if the Commission's work was to be effective, the priorities identified for the quick-impact projects must be coordinated with the priorities of the eventual strategy.

39. **Ms. Gallardo Hernández** (El Salvador) said that Guinea-Bissau's commitment to tackling its problems should be matched by intensified efforts on the part of the Commission, focusing on the priority areas identified. As a country with experience of post-conflict recovery, El Salvador understood the difficulties faced by Guinea-Bissau and commended its achievements thus far. Monetary resources were needed in order to address the problems in the energy sector and to restructure the electoral system and the defence sector. Her delegation therefore agreed that the question of Guinea-Bissau's eligibility for resources from the Peacebuilding Fund should be addressed as a matter of priority. As Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned, El Salvador was ready to share information on the Group's findings, including mistakes that should be avoided by the United Nations system.

40. She asked whether Guinea-Bissau had been successful in reintegrating the military into civil society. El Salvador could share its experience in that regard with Guinea-Bissau. She also wished to know how Guinea-Bissau planned to make use of the Commission's support to involve women and young people in reconciliation efforts and to encourage them to lead a productive life and to participate in political decision-making. Lastly, she requested the views of the Guinea-Bissau delegation on what role the Commission could play in follow-up measures at the regional level.

41. **Ms. Rovirosa** (Mexico) welcomed the information provided by the representative of Guinea-Bissau, since the Commission must listen to the Guinea-Bissau authorities if it was to fulfil its mandate in that country. All peacebuilding strategies should be drawn up on the basis of the priorities identified by the country concerned so as to ensure national ownership of each strategy. Mexico would continue to offer assistance in areas in which it had experience and could bring added value, such as electoral processes, migration, action to combat organized crime and international trade negotiations. The peacebuilding strategy for Guinea-Bissau should strike a balance between security sector reform and public administration reform. Her delegation agreed that a flow of resources was needed in order to address the priorities identified. Guinea-Bissau should therefore be declared eligible to receive resources from the Peacebuilding Fund as soon as possible.

42. **Mr. Fernie** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation particularly welcomed the commitment of the Government of Guinea-Bissau to national dialogue, including with civil society and private sector representatives. The Commission attached great importance to national ownership of peacebuilding efforts, which was broader than Government ownership.

43. The United Kingdom was a non-traditional donor with respect to Guinea-Bissau in that it did not have a permanent presence or a substantial aid programme there. However, it was keen to support the Government's strategy and had a distinctive "niche" contribution to make in the area of security sector reform. He hoped that as many countries as possible, whether or not they had a permanent presence or large aid commitments in Guinea-Bissau, would consider what assistance they might be able to provide in specific fields. Indeed, that approach should be applied to any country that was placed on the Commission's agenda.

44. His delegation hoped that resources from the Peacebuilding Fund could be released soon and agreed that they should be focused initially on quick-impact projects so as to build confidence in the international community's engagement with Guinea-Bissau. A second, larger, tranche of funding should be reserved for the peacebuilding strategy currently under preparation, which should be informed by local realities on the ground and the Government's priorities.

45. **Ms. McAuliffe** (International Monetary Fund) said that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had recently approved emergency post-conflict assistance for Guinea-Bissau in order to support the Government's economic and financial programme for 2008, the aim of which was to stabilize the fiscal

situation in the immediate term and to lay the groundwork for reviving growth and achieving fiscal sustainability in the medium term. The priority for 2008 was to ensure that current expenditures were paid on time and that no new arrears were accumulated. IMF was also involved in technical assistance aimed at strengthening public administration and improving budgetary management, the availability of economic statistics and revenue collection.

46. Another priority was to settle the substantial wage arrears and arrears to government suppliers which had accumulated in previous years and which had been stifling the private sector. However, the Government could not afford to pay off the arrears from its existing resources. IMF had therefore introduced a project, funded by the European Union, to audit the arrears, after which donor assistance would be sought in order to pay them off.

47. There was also an urgent need for external budgetary assistance to support Guinea-Bissau's reform programme. Guinea-Bissau was therefore reaching out to both traditional and non-traditional donors for support. Technical assistance was also needed to rebuild capacity and to implement the critical reforms needed for fiscal and macroeconomic stability. The Commission played an important role in mobilizing and coordinating traditional and non-traditional donors, a role which should be beefed up in Guinea-Bissau. IMF planned to continue its support for Guinea-Bissau through post-conflict assistance programmes, the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility and the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative.

48. **Mr. Jallow** (Gambia) said that, as a neighbour to Guinea-Bissau, the Gambia could not help but be affected by the situation in the latter country. Over the years it had made a modest contribution to the education and health sectors in Guinea-Bissau. He commended the Government's commitment to addressing the significant problems which the country faced. However, the support of the international community would be needed in order to achieve success. Moreover, interventions should be carried out simultaneously rather than in sequence so as to avoid any delays that could exacerbate the country's difficulties.

49. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) said that the main obstacles to addressing the priorities identified by the Government of Guinea-Bissau were the lack of resources and capacity for the implementation of relevant programmes. The Commission should therefore focus on establishing quick and reliable disbursement mechanisms. It should also consider ways of helping the Government to maximize internal resource mobilization, which was important for sustainable development and economic recovery.

50. **Mr. Seye** (Senegal) said that there was a high level of cooperation between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, which were neighbouring countries. A number of years previously, Senegal had put forward the idea of a high-level conference to mobilize donors to Guinea-Bissau. His delegation was therefore particularly pleased that Guinea-Bissau had been placed on the Commission's agenda. Against overwhelming odds, the country had survived thanks to the character and courage of its people and their commitment to controlling their own destiny. The international community should match that commitment, in particular through the provision of the resources needed to address its problems. A weak Guinea-Bissau made the entire West African subregion vulnerable. Guinea-Bissau should therefore be given access to the Peacebuilding Fund as a matter of urgency. At the same time, both traditional and non-traditional donors should provide assistance to the country.

51. **The Chairperson** said that, on the basis of prior consultations and the statements made by a number of delegations at the current meeting, she took it that the Commission wished to advise the Secretary-General to declare Guinea-Bissau eligible for support from the Peacebuilding Fund.

52. *It was so decided.*

53. **Mr. Cabi** (Guinea-Bissau) said that, since the country had achieved independence in 1974, there had been a number of attempts to reform the armed forces, in particular to reduce their size. Those efforts had been set back by the civil conflict of 1998 to 1999. However, the Government was now endeavouring to provide decent housing and pay for military veterans and to reintegrate them into society by training them for other activities so that they could contribute to the country's development.

54. Turning to the problem of corruption, he said that the auditing of State finances had been neglected for some time before his Government had come into

power. The new Government had therefore carried out an audit within a few months of coming to power, with a view to establishing a climate of discipline and transparency. He welcomed the further assistance offered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in that regard.

55. In collaboration with IMF, his Government was working on business programmes in order to boost the entrepreneurial class, whose poverty had been exacerbated by the 1998-1999 conflict. Peace, reconciliation and stability should be the common goal in order to inspire the confidence of investors.

56. The Government would create appropriate mechanisms in order to optimize its cooperation with the Commission, along the lines of the ad hoc committee it had set up for the purpose of collaboration with IMF. That committee met regularly to analyse financial needs and to evaluate spending.

57. Drug trafficking activity had begun to decrease as a result of measures such as the stationing of security forces in the areas most affected. His Government welcomed the aid it had received for that purpose. Maintaining control over the country's territory was difficult, particularly because of the large number of uninhabited islands, which were easily exploited by foreigners for the purposes of drug trafficking, illegal immigration and organized crime. Mechanisms for effective monitoring of movements into and out of the national territory were needed. His Government was determined to take responsibility for tackling that problem and all the other problems which the country faced. He was convinced that, with the support and solidarity pledged at the current meeting, those efforts would be successful.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.